



Rick Woodard
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DEPARTMENT OF
UTILITIES

ENGINEERING SERVICES

CITY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA

May 14, 1998
980234:EC

5770 FREEPORT BLVD.
SUITE 100
SACRAMENTO, CA
95822-2911

PH 916-433-6318
FAX 916-433-6652

Bruce A. Macler, Ph.D.
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Water Management Division
75 Hawthorne Street, Mail Code W-6-1
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

Dear Bruce:

The purpose of this letter is to respond to the CALFED Drinking Water Team's request for input on watershed issues from local water purveyors within the CALFED study area, such as the City of Sacramento. It is my understanding that this request was made at the April 29 Drinking Water Team meeting.

The City of Sacramento's water treatment plants provide a safe and reliable drinking water supply to our residents. We appreciate the opportunity for input to the CALFED Drinking Water Team regarding topics for source water protection that CALFED resources may be helpful in addressing.

The City of Sacramento has identified watershed management as a priority. We participate in regional watershed protection programs such as the Sacramento River Watershed Program and encourage the watershed/stakeholder approach in developing regional solutions with input of the various stakeholders in the watershed.

The following topics of interest are based on sanitary survey reports and recent discussions with our water treatment plant staff. The Sacramento River Watershed Sanitary Survey (December 1995) evaluated the watershed tributary to the Sacramento River Water Treatment Plant, which is downstream of the confluence of the Sacramento and American river; this report was prepared jointly for the City of West Sacramento as well. The report included evaluation of selected constituents as well as potential sources of contamination in the watershed. The American River Watershed Sanitary Survey Update Report (to be completed December 1998) includes water quality evaluations and coverage of watershed issues for eleven water purveyors on the American River.

- Algal blooms in upstream reservoirs and aquatic weed growth in the lower American River

This is a water treatment issue for the Fairbairn Water Treatment Plant; impacts to the water supply are taste and odor issues as well as clogging of fish screens.

Suggested action item: Consideration of research on why this problem occurs and potential solutions.

- Impacts of agricultural activities on the Sacramento River due to spring runoff

The City of Sacramento appreciates the efforts by the Department of Food and Agriculture, Regional Water Quality Control Board - Central Valley District, and the rice industry to develop management programs for agricultural runoff that have greatly diminished impacts. Agricultural activities remain a concern as both a watershed and treatment issue. Rice pesticides, for example, continue to be detected at our treatment plant intake. Conditions in the watershed could lead to potential exceedences of primary and secondary MCLs.

Suggested action item: Requesting input from the Department of Food and Agriculture, Regional Board, and agricultural interest groups on research or programs needs that could result in water quality improvements. Queries to UC Extension specialists, Farm Advisors, County Agricultural Commissioners, etc. may also be helpful.

Ideas for assistance could be research/evaluations on how to prevent drains from discharging during spring storms, design of holding basins, training and educational opportunities, etc.

- Cryptosporidium (both rivers)

There are various sources which are potential sources of contamination in the watershed.

- a. Boating/recreation education (both rivers)

Dumping of sewage from houseboats, and human wastes from boaters and other river recreationalists are of concern in the watershed.

Suggested action item: Evaluate educational and regulatory needs. Include California Department of Boating and Waterways, S.F. Bay Estuary Project, boating and marina interests, other recreational interests, Park Departments, enforcement agencies such as the U.S. Coast Guard, Regional Water Quality Control Board, County Sheriff Department, etc. in discussions.

Support research to identify issues and solutions.

Support solutions such as educational efforts through programs such as the Department of Boating of Waterways, the Sacramento River Watershed Program, local and other efforts to get the message out, facility improvements, etc.

Educational solutions could include programs such as developing partnerships with recreational interests; distribution of materials at marinas, parks, recreational supply stores; signage at recreational areas; participation in community events.

Facility improvements could include improved or additional pumpout and restroom facilities.

b. Grazing Industry (Sacramento River)

The City of Sacramento, Department of Utilities has been tracking research into grazing animals and their potential contribution of pathogens to the Sacramento River system as well as the implementation of grazing management practices in the Sacramento River watershed. The UC Extension has been conducting extensive research on various grazing animals; one of the factors in the success of this research is the cooperation of the grazing industry. The Cattlemen's Association has been supporting research on best management practices for grazing lands and well as promoting these practices in its educational outreach programs. The UC Davis Extension program provides educational resources and rangeland water quality short courses for the grazing industry.

Suggested action item: Contact UC Extension research and educational offices, grazing industry representatives, encourage participation of ranchers, etc. in identifying research topics, training opportunities, etc.

Support activities to better identify problems and solutions such as literature reviews, research, and in-stream monitoring programs.

c. Wild Animals (both rivers)

UC Davis is planning to conduct research on this potential source of pathogens.

Suggested action item: Include UC Extension research and educational offices, Park Departments, and other interested parties in identifying potential problems.

Support activities to better identify problems and solutions such as literature reviews, research, and in-stream monitoring programs.

d. Urban Runoff (both rivers)

Urban runoff from the large urbanized Sacramento area is a potential source of pathogens. The Sacramento Stormwater Management Program is currently conducting literature reviews and preparing an issues paper to consider this potential problem.

Suggested action item: Support activities to better identify problems and solutions such as literature reviews, research, and public education activities. Our position on stormwater management is to develop and implement proactive pollution reduction programs using the regulatory standards approach applied to stormwater which is maximum extent practicable (MEP).

• Other Issues

The American River Watershed Sanitary Survey Update Report is currently underway. Additional issues may arise from the report such as MTBE from recreational boaters.

The City of Sacramento also is a discharger of urban runoff as well as combined sewer overflows. As both water purveyor and discharger, we believe there is a need to have a balanced approach relative to CALFED's water quality efforts. The City's ongoing efforts to improve its combined sewer system as well as stormwater quality could greatly benefit from CALFED support.

We appreciate this opportunity to convey our issues of interest in the watershed. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (916)433-6635 if additional information is needed such as contact names for various parties, or data from our water treatment plants. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Elissa Callman
Associate Civil Engineer

cc: Jim Sequeira, Department of Utilities
Mike Yee, Plant Services
Roland Pang, Plant Services
Ron Myers, Plant Services
Gary Reents, Engineering Services
Dave Brent, Engineering Services
Larry Nash, Engineering Services
Rick Woodard, CALFED
Bill Crooks, Consultant
Elaine Archibald, Archibald and Wallberg Consultants
Jeanne Wallberg, Archibald and Wallberg Consultants
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